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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
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MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

The Current Position of Hanoi and Peiping
On a Negotiated Settlement in Vietnam

1. According to press reports from Paris the Vietnamese Communists have recently urged the French to step up their efforts aimed at arranging a negotiated settlement of the war in South Vietnam. These accounts are probably leaks of discussions between French officials and Asian Communist representatives which began in December and continued on into February.

2.

We have seen nothing in Communist statements or in Communist behavior which would support the contention that either Hanoi or Peiping is interested in a conference solution except on its own terms.

3. All indications are that the DRV is no more flexible now than it ever was in regard to a negotiated settlement. On 10 February Hanoi specifically reiterated its standard demands, stressing the two key concepts on which the Communists have always insisted--the necessity for withdrawal of US forces from South Vietnam and the initiation of bilateral negotiations between the Communist Liberation Front (NLSV) and the government in Saigon. DRV officials, moreover, have privately taken the same line in conversations with Western diplomats in Hanoi.

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4. The DRV's terms which have not changed substantially since they were first put forward in 1963, include:

- A. Withdrawal of US military personnel and equipment is a precondition for any serious negotiations.
- B. The South Vietnamese government must abide by the military provisions of the Geneva agreements: refrain from any military alliances, permit no foreign military bases or foreign military personnel in South Vietnam.
- C. The South Vietnamese people must be permitted to settle their internal affairs without outside interference in accordance with the program of the Front. This is interpreted as the formulation of a coalition government with Front participation.
- D. Consultation must take place between the two zones looking toward eventual reunification.
- E. As of July 1964 Hanoi has included as a further condition an end to US "provocations" against DRV territory.

5. The recent activities of North Vietnamese agents in Paris suggest that Hanoi is seeking to stimulate French pressure for a US withdrawal as the first step toward a negotiated settlement of the "impasse" in Indochina. These maneuvers by the Communists appear designed mainly to encourage opposition in France and elsewhere in the Free World to continued prosecution of the war against the Viet Cong and to possible further US attacks against the DRV.

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6. Such motives were suggested by the North Vietnamese response to French initiatives during the Paris conversations. Although there was no give in the position taken by the DRV representative, he stressed an interest in continuing the discussions, doubtless with a view to keeping French hopes for a negotiated settlement alive. Similar objectives probably lie behind the recent propaganda from Hanoi, which has reported without comment the substance of French and Cambodian calls for a new international conference on Indochina. There is, however, no evidence available to us that the North Vietnamese are giving serious consideration to a conference.

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7. The Chinese have consistently backed Hanoi's hard line concerning negotiations and do not appear interested, at this time, even in the kind of talks which might be exploited under some circumstances to give Communist forces a breathing space.

8. The Chinese Communists are almost certainly optimistic concerning developments in South Vietnam. The conversations initiated by the Chinese in Paris were apparently designed to obtain a better reading on these questions, and at the same time to stimulate new French pressure on the US to withdraw quietly from the "hopeless" impasse in Indochina. In this endeavor Peiping is playing skillfully on French ambitions for a larger role in Southeast Asia as mediators of the Sino-US conflict.

9. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Peiping--like Hanoi--has no desire for any agreement except on Communist terms. The Chinese continue to insist that a unilateral US withdrawal is the only basis for settlement.

10. Peiping's latest public statement on the question of possible negotiations ridicules the idea of talks. A key paragraph of the People's Daily editorial on 19 February claims that the US is hoping to gain at the conference table what it cannot win on the battlefield and then dismisses the notion as "too much wishful thinking." The Chinese go on to say that peace can be had in Vietnam at any time but only after the "US aggressors have withdrawn" to permit the people in Vietnam to "settle their own problems."

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